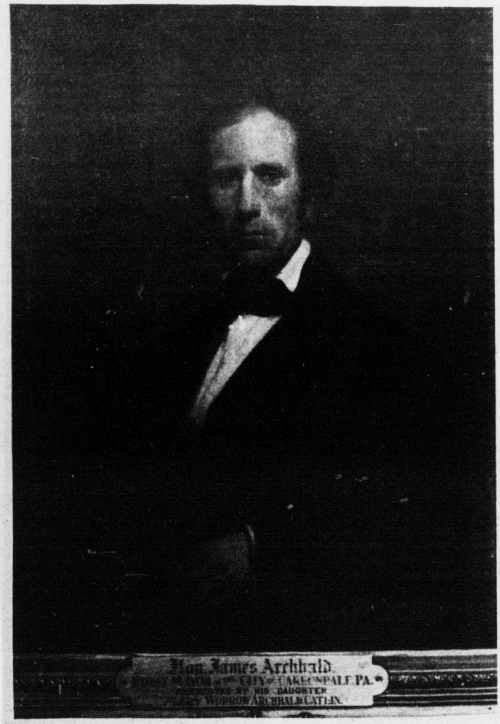

HONORABLE JAMES ARCHBALD

captain of Company I, 132nd Pennsylvania Infantry in the Civil war; on Jan. 25, 1865, he married Hannah M. Albright; 2. Mary Wodrow, married a Mr. Catlin of Scranton; 3. Thomas Frothingham, a retired contractor who died in Corning, N.Y., on Dc. 16, 1883; 4. Augusta, died in Scranton on March 9, 1873; 5. Robert Wodrow, president judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Lackawanna County.

In 1836 or 1837, James Archbald was offered, and accepted, the position of engineer in charge of that portion of the Erie Canal enlargement lying between Troy and Utica (100 miles). The offer was made by William C. Bouck, canal commissioner and later governor of New York.

The corruption prevalent among the Erie Canal authorities, however, disgusted James Archbald, and he became disinterested in the Erie Canal. At the earnest solicitation of the president of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, James Archbald once again took charge of the road.

In 1847, the Pennsylvania Coal Company commenced building their railroad from Pittston to Hawley and this, too, was under the direction of James Archbald. The road, constructed according to his plans, was considered a model for economical transportation of coal.

Innovative

James Archbald was a very innovative railroad builder and engineer.

One of his important innovations in this field is described by J.A. Clark (p. 161): "While Mr. Archbald was in charge of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad at Carbondale he conceived the plan of raising the road at the head of each plane, and lowering at the foot of the next. As the road was before that constructed it was perfectly level between the planes and the cars were drawn back and forward from one to the other by horses.

"Mr. Archbald's plan was to make avail of the force of gravity by a slight inclination, so that the cars would run of themselves after being drawn up the planes by stationary engines. He laid his proposition before the managers of the company, and with difficulty to Scranton, after having resided in Carbondale for about 30 years. In 1858, he was appointed chief engineer of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company, and President of the Lackawanna and Bloomsburg Railroad, both of which positions he held at the time of his death.

In 1866, James Archbald reluctantly accepted the unanimous nomination of the Republican party for Congress, but was defeated by what J.A. Clark (p. 161) calls one of the "boldest naturalization frauds ever witnessed in this county."

On Aug. 26, 1870, James Archbald died in Scranton.

At the time of his death, he was, in addition to serving as chief engineer of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company and president of the Lackawanna and Bloomsburg Railroad, a member of the board of directors of the Dickson Manufacturing Company, the Scranton Gas and Water Company, and the Scranton Savings Bank.

James Archbald is interred in Dunmore Cemetery.

(Note by the author: Much of the information about James Archbald here reported was learned from the biographical sketches of James Archbald that are given in: (1) J.A. Clark's *The Wyoming Valley, Upper Waters of the Susquehanna, and the Lackawanna Coal-Region, including views of the natural scenery of northern Pennsylvania. From the Indian Occupancy to the Year 1875. Photographically illustrated.* (Scranton, Pa.: J.A. Clark, publisher, 1875), pp. 159-161. The author is indebted to Donald W. Powell for having brought this book to his attention. (2) *Portrait and Biographical Record of Lackawanna County Pennsylvania. Containing Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens of the County.* (New York and Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1897), pp. 712-714.